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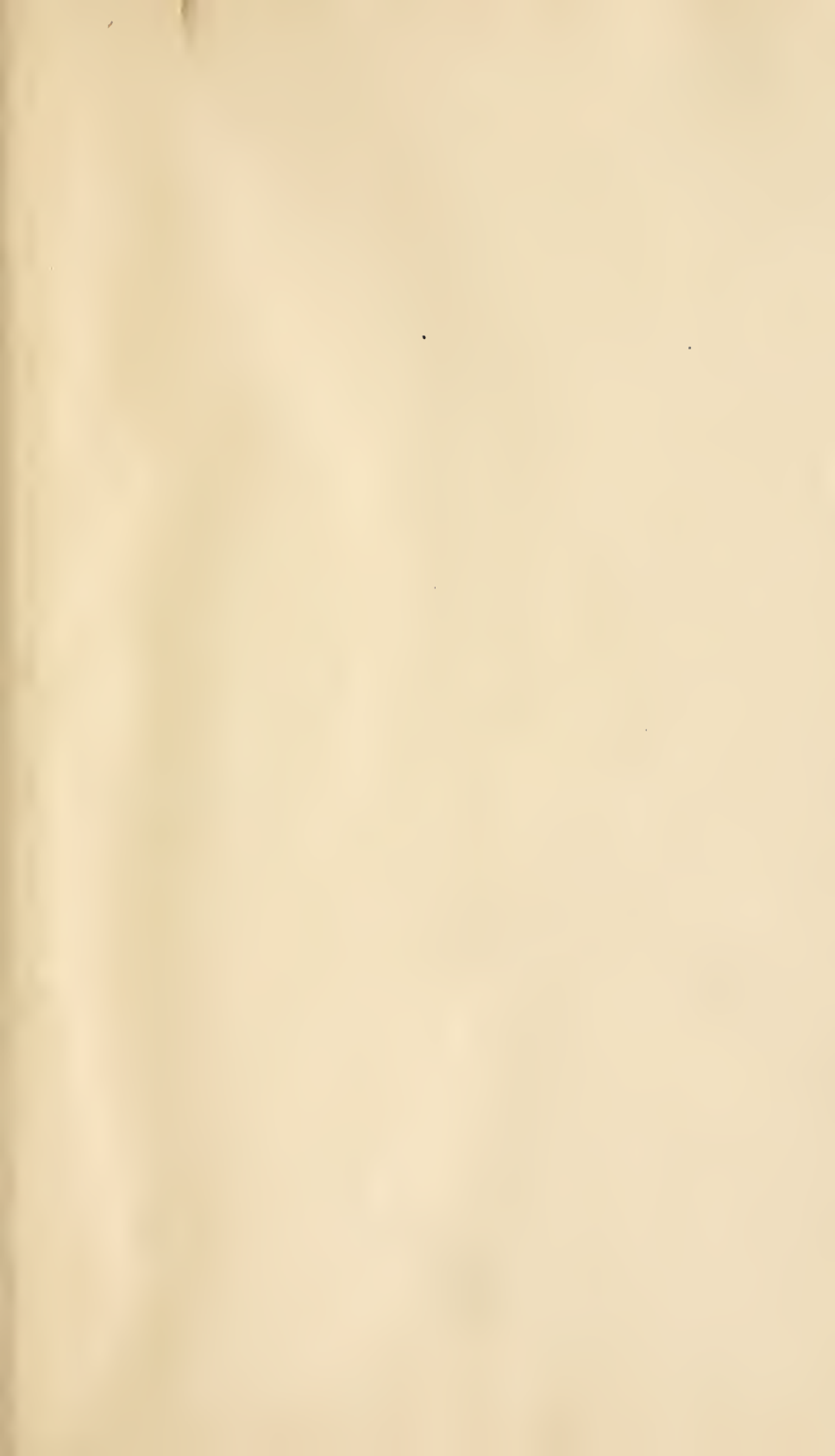
Speeches of Senator  
S. A. Douglas at  
public receptions.

1859.



Class 241

Book 1171









157  
SPEECHES

OF

411  
651  
SENATOR S. A. DOUGLAS,

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS

PUBLIC RECEPTIONS

BY THE CITIZENS OF

NEW ORLEANS, PHILADELPHIA, AND

BALTIMORE.

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WASHINGTON:

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1859.

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# SPEECH OF SENATOR S. A. DOUGLAS

AT THE MEETING

IN ODD-FELLOWS' HALL, NEW ORLEANS,

ON

MONDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 6, 1858.

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MR. PRESIDENT AND CITIZENS OF NEW ORLEANS: It was with much hesitation and no small degree of reluctance that I was induced to give my consent to address you on this occasion. I have just passed through a fierce conflict in my own State, which required me to perform more speaking than was either agreeable to my wishes, or consistent with my strength. When I determined to visit New Orleans, it was only on private business of an imperative character; and it was my desire to arrive and depart as quietly as possible, and without, in any way, connecting myself with politics. I approached your city, as I supposed, unheralded and unknown, and I was amazed at the magnificent reception extended to me on the levee, by so vast a concourse of people, embracing the municipal authorities, the citizens in their individual capacity, my own political friends, and men of all political parties. This was a compliment which filled my heart with gratitude, and did not leave me at liberty to decline the first request you might make of me in return. I have, therefore, yielded to your solicitations, to make a few remarks on the political topics which now agitate the public mind throughout the length and breadth of our glorious Republic, and I have done so the more readily as I desire to know whether the principles, which are admitted to be sound and orthodox in the free States, can pass current in the slave States.

So long as we live under a common Constitution, binding on the people of all the States, any political creed which can not be proclaimed in Louisiana as boldly as in Illinois, must be unsound and unsafe. I shall not attempt to enter upon any new views, or propound any original ideas with the view of testing the truth of this proposition, but shall simply discuss these questions now at issue in the country, in the same manner that I am in the habit of doing before an Illinois audience. The tendency of events during the past fifteen years, has been to force the organization of political parties on a geographical basis, to array the North against the South, embittering the one against the other, under the misapprehension that there is some irreconcilable antagonism in their interests which prevents harmony between them. For the last twenty-five years I have been in public life; fifteen years have been spent in the Congress of the United States, and the whole of my life has been devoted to the discovery and elucidation of some common ground on which Northern and Southern men might stand on terms of equality and justice. If you will take pains to examine the history of this sectional strife which has grown up in our midst, you will find that the whole contest has arisen from an attempt on the part of the Federal Government to assume, or usurp, the exercise of powers not conferred by the federal constitution. When this Government was formed, the confederacy consisted of thirteen States, twelve of which were slaveholding States,

while one was what is called a free State. Suppose the doctrine had then prevailed which was proclaimed by my opponent, Mr. Lincoln, in Illinois, by Mr. Seward, in New York, and by the leaders of the Abolition or Black Republican party throughout the North—the doctrine that uniformity in the domestic institutions of the several States is necessary, that a house divided against itself cannot stand; that this Government, divided into free and slave States, cannot endure; that it must become all free or all slave; that it must be all the one thing or the other—and what do you think would have been the result? Suppose that Mr. Seward himself had been a member of the Convention which framed the Constitution, and when the members came to affix their signatures to that instrument, this doctrine of uniformity had been proclaimed, declaring that the domestic institutions of the several States must be the same, and what would have been the effect? Would the one free State have outvoted the twelve slave States? On the contrary would not the twelve slave States have outvoted the one free State, and thus slavery have been established in all the States forever by an irrevocable provision of the Constitution?

Why was this not done? Simply because the sages who formed our Government had more at heart the great principles of civil liberty than the desire of sectional power or sectional advantage—because they wished to establish the principle that each State should possess the sovereign power of legislation over its own domestic institutions—to form them and modify them to suit itself, retaining slavery as long as it might desire to retain it, and abolishing it whenever it chose. This Government was formed on the principle of State-Rights and State Sovereignty. It is a confederacy of sovereign and independent States, having a certain common purpose, each retaining the right to manage its own affairs, and to maintain its own liberties inside of its own jurisdiction.

It is a fatal heresy to proclaim the doctrine that there ought to be or can be uniformity among the different States of this Union, as to their local and domestic institutions. Uniformity is neither possible nor desirable. Our fathers knew, when they made this Government for so many different communities, that there must necessarily be a corresponding variety in the laws and domestic institutions adapted to the wants and characteristics of each separate locality. They knew that variety and dissimilarity of local and domestic institutions was an essential element in a confederated form of Government. On this point you find a vast difference between the Abolition or Black Republican party, on the one hand, and the Democratic party on the other.

Hitherto the effort has been made, principally in the North, to array the North against the South and the South against the North, embittering them against each other, until no Southern man would vote for a northern candidate, and no northern man would trust a southern candidate, and now the Black Republican party is attempting to effect this result by declaring the doctrine that the Union cannot continue to exist half slave and half free, and that it must become all one thing or all the other. I can well understand how unscrupulous politicians in the North, who prefer their own aggrandizement to the peace of the country and the perpetuity of the Union can advocate this doctrine. They belong to the stronger section, and think that they will be able to overwhelm the weaker. But how long has it been since these men in the North raised this clamor? Did we of the North, whilst you were in the majority and we in the minority, declare that the Union could not continue to exist divided into free and slave States? No! So long as the free States were the minority section, the North adhered to the doctrine that each State should manage its own domestic affairs without interference from the other States or from the Federal Government; but when, in the progress of events the free States increased until they obtained the majority in the House of Representatives, and then a tie in the Senate, ambitious men in the North found that by organizing sectional parties, belonging as they did to the strongest section, they could ride into power. The Black Republican or Abolition party is sectional in its organization, in its principles and in its whole line of policy. Every argument used by it is addressed to Northern ambition, and is directed against the southern people and southern institutions, and it naturally has a baneful influence on some of the southern

people, inducing them to try to form a southern party in opposition to it. Thus you see the result of the attempts made to introduce the test, not whether a representative is faithful to his own State and to the federal compact, but whether he is true to the North or faithful to the South.

Let me remind you that the Constitution recognizes no such divisions. It recognizes no North and no South, but one Republic under one Constitution, and thirty-two independent States, bound together by one federal compact. Hence I say to you that I owe no allegiance either to the North or to the South. My allegiance is to my own State, and through that State, to the Federal Government—and to no other power on earth. Let this principle be observed and acted upon in good faith, and there will always be peace between the North and the South, and between all the States of this glorious confederacy. When I addressed this argument to Northern men—and especially to large crowds of Abolitionists, as I have often done—I have been answered that slavery is so great and monstrous an evil, that their consciences will not permit them to be quiet in regard to it even after they have performed their whole duty in their own State. They bring forward the Declaration of Independence, and read from it with wonderful satisfaction. I can give you their dogmas, as presented in every Abolition Catechism. They take the Declaration of Independence, as I have said, and read this passage, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Then they stop and say, "doesn't that Declaration tell us that all men are created equal? Is not a negro a man, and is he not, therefore, the equal of the white man? Was he not made equal by his Creator, and is his equality not, therefore, inalienable by Divine law? Then how can you reduce him to an inferior position by any human law?"

By this specious, but sophistical argument, they have succeeded in imposing on some weak-minded men, and some old women and children, until they have educated a generation who really believe that the negro is their brother. And I must be permitted to tell you that many, even of your southern men, have quailed under that argument, and failed to meet it. My answer is this: When the framers of the Declaration declared that all men were equal, they had no reference whatever to the negro. They were speaking of white men—men of European birth and European descent, and had no reference to the negro or to any other inferior and dependent race. And now for the proof, as I have heretofore submitted it at home. When the Declaration was made, the colonies were all slave-holding. Every man that signed the Declaration represented a slave-holding constituency. Bearing these facts in mind, tell me if you believe that those men were such hypocrites as to admit the negroes belonging to them to be their equals by divine right, and yet hold those negroes in slavery the balance of their lives. Any man who asserts that the signers of the Declaration had reference to negroes in that document, declares every signer to have been a hypocrite, and worse than a hypocrite.

I repeat, that this Government was made by white men, for the benefit of white men and their posterity forever, to be administered by white men, and none others.

It is a law of humanity, a law of civilization, that whenever a man, or a race of men, show themselves incapable of managing their own affairs, they must consent to be governed by those who are capable of performing the duty. It is on this principle that you establish those institutions of charity, for the support of the blind, or the deaf and dumb, or the insane. In accordance with this principle I assert that the negro race, under all circumstances, at all times and in all countries, has shown itself incapable of self-government.

From these considerations, I arrive at the conclusion that the negro race being inferior, does not form any component element in the governing power of the American system of government. Yet, the negro is a human being, and as such is entitled to all the privileges and immunities which can be extended to him consistent with the safety of the society in which he lives. I presume that all men, North and South, of whatever politics, religion, or prejudices, will assent to the principle that humanity compels us to extend to the negro,



and all other dependent races, all the privileges and immunities consistent with the good of the society in which they reside. Perhaps you will ask me, as the Abolitionists have asked me, what are these privileges and immunities—what their nature and extent? I return the same answer I have so often given them. It is a question for each State to decide for itself, independent of any other State or of the Federal Government. Illinois has decided the question for herself. We have adopted a line of policy which has given satisfaction to us. If you do not like it, though we may regret your dislike, we must be permitted to say, with entire respect, that it is none of your business. If you do not like our laws on the subject of negro slavery, or any other domestic concern, stay at home and live under such laws as you choose to make. The law in our State now is, that a negro shall not be a citizen, nor shall he be a slave; but during our territorial existence, when the settlers were mainly from slave-holding States, bringing their slave property with them, the Territorial Legislature, in defiance of the celebrated ordinance of 1787, established slavery in Illinois, and maintained it for years. It was abolished because, from the circumstances of our climate and soil, and productions, it was found not to be profitable or conducive to our welfare. If we had lived farther south, in the districts which produce sugar, and cotton, and rice, we would have seen just as much virtue in slave labor as you do in Louisiana. And, perhaps, if some of the more excitable of our southern friends, happened to live among the granite hills of New Hampshire, they would entertain very different views from those they now hold. This question of slavery is not a question of legislation at all, but of climate, soil, and self-interest. You can establish slavery nowhere by any law of Congress, or of a territorial legislature, or by any other power, contrary to the will of the people where it is to exist; and, in my opinion, you should never be permitted to force it upon an unwilling people.

Our kind friends over in Kentucky, when their servants became old and valueless, and a tax on their masters, showed their humanity by emancipating them and sending them into Illinois. This was also the case in other slave States, until Illinois was in danger of becoming a free negro colony, when she found it necessary to provide for her own protection by enacting that no more negroes should come to Illinois to reside, whether free or slave. Having determined not to have slavery, she would not establish a free negro colony for your benefit. Illinois says to the slave States, take care of your own negroes, make just such laws as you choose and be responsible to God and to your posterity.

Let us alone and we will let you alone. That is the policy of Illinois in regard to slavery and the negro question. If you say you do not like that it cannot be helped. Illinois has just as much right to adopt her policy as you in Louisiana have to adopt a different policy. We are prepared to make a bargain with you, or rather to maintain inviolate the bargain our fathers made in the Federal Constitution—which enjoins upon every State the duty of minding its own business and letting its neighbors alone. Under that principle this Union can exist forever—divided into free and slave States, each State having the right to preserve and retain slavery as long as it chooses, and abolish it whenever it pleases. That is what I mean when I say that the Democratic party is a party devoted to State Rights and popular Sovereignty, in opposition to that other policy which concentrates the liberties and rights of the people in the Federal Government.

The discussion of this question in the North has so far modified public opinion as to induce a willingness to acquiesce in its application to the States, but the Black Republicans deny the propriety of applying it to the Territories.

On this point the Abolitionists assert the right of Congress, under the Constitution, to form and establish for the people of the Territories their domestic institutions, without their consent. The Democratic party deny that Congress can rightfully exercise any such authority.

We hold, that for Congress to say to any people, you shall or shall not have such or such institutions, is a violation of the great principles of our Federal Government. In the discussion of these questions, I sometimes go back to the history of the revolution, and show that the same principles were involved,

when the British Government attempted to pass laws for the American colonies, without giving them a representation in Parliament.

In opposition to this claim our fathers rose up and said: We will obey these laws of Parliament, which are imperial laws, and not local laws—but we will not submit to local laws affecting our domestic institutions, and passed without giving us a fair representation in Parliament. The Democratic party now says that Congress has no right to establish or to prohibit slavery. We say that the Territories should be open to the citizens of the United States to go there with their property, subject alike to the laws, when they arrive there. But an objection is raised by some of our southern friends, and I have been asked here and at home, what I meant by the doctrine of popular sovereignty in the Territories, and whether we abide by the Dred Scott decision. In a discussion with my opponent, Mr. Lincoln, at Freeport, Illinois, the question was put to me whether, in the event of the people or Legislature of a Territory being hostile to slavery, there was any lawful means by which slavery could be excluded. I said yes, and proceeded to state the means. I will state them here to you. The Democracy of Illinois, in the first place, accepts the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in the case of Dred Scott, as an authoritative interpretation of the Constitution. In accordance with that decision, we hold that slaves are property, and hence on an equality with all other kinds of property, and that the owner of a slave has the same right to move into a Territory and carry his slave property with him, as the owner of any other property has to go there and carry his property. All citizens of the United States, no matter whether they come from the North or the South, from a free State or a slave State, can enter a Territory with their property on an equal footing. And, I apprehend, when you arrive there with your property, of whatever description, it is subject to the local laws of the Territory. How can your slave property be protected without local law, any more than any other kind of property? The Constitution gives you the right to go into a Territory and carry your slaves with you, the same as any other species of property; but it does not punish any man for stealing your slaves any more than stealing any other kind of property. Congress has never yet passed a law providing a criminal code or furnishing protection to any kind of property. It has simply organized the Territory and established a Legislature, that Legislature being vested with legislative power over all rightful subjects of legislation, subject only to the Constitution of the United States. Hence whatever jurisdiction the Legislature possesses over other property, it has over slave property, no more no less. Let me ask you, as southern men, whether you can hold slaves anywhere unless protected by the local law? Would not the inaction of the local Legislature, its refusal to provide a slave code, or to punish offences against that species of property, exclude slavery just as effectually as a Constitutional prohibition? Would it not have that effect in Louisiana and in every other State? No one will deny it. Then, let me ask you, if the people of a Territory refuse to pass a slave code, how are you going to make them do it? When you give them power to legislate on all rightful subjects of legislation, it becomes a question for them to decide, and not for you.

If the local Legislature imposes a tax on horses, or any other kind of property, you may think it a hardship, but how are you going to help it? Just so it is with regard to traffic in liquors. If you are dealing in liquors, you have the same right to take your liquor into the Territory that anybody else has to take any other species of property. You may pass through and take your liquors *in transitu*, and you will be protected in your right of property under the Constitution of the United States; but if you open the packages they become subject to the local law; and should the Maine law happen to prevail in the Territory, you had better travel with your liquors. Hence, if the local Legislature has the same power over slave property as over every other species of property, what right have you to complain of that equality! But if you do complain where is your remedy? And let me say to you that if you oppose this just doctrine, if you attempt to exempt slaves from the same rules that apply to every other kind of property, you will abandon your strongest ground of defence against the assaults of the Black Republicans and Abolitionists. If the

people of a Territory are in favor of slavery they will make laws to protect it; if opposed to slavery they will not make those laws and you can not compel them to do it. But I will tell you when they will have it, and when slavery will find protection in a Territory. It is when the territory lies in those latitudes and climates which adapt it to the profitable production of rice and sugar and cotton, and where slave labor will be remunerative. Thus, slavery will exist wherever soil, climate, and productions demand it, and it will exist nowhere else. Now, if climate, and soil, and self-interest will regulate this question, why should we quarrel about it? When you arrive at a certain distance to the North of the line there can not be any doubt of the result: and so when you go a certain distance South the result will be equally certain the other way. But in the great central regions, where there may be some doubt as to the effect of natural causes, who ought to decide the question except the people residing there, who have all their interests there; who have gone there to live with their wives and children? Any party which attempts, by a system of coercion, to force any institutions into regions not adopted to them, violates the great principles on which our Government is founded.

You now have my views on the subject of slavery in the Territories. Practically, they amount simply to this: If the people want slavery they will have it; if they do not want it they will not have it, and you cannot force it upon them. If these principles be recognised and adhered to, we can live in peace and harmony together; but just as surely as you attempt to force the people to have slavery, against their will, in regions to which it is not adapted, fanaticism will take control of the Federal Government.

It was on these principles that, last winter, I resisted the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton constitution. I have said, what I repeat here, that my opposition was not based upon any provision in that constitution relating to the subject of slavery. I then said that if Kansas wanted to be a slaveholding State, she had a right to be so, and if she wanted to be a free State, she had the same right. If the Lecompton constitution was an embodiment of the people's will, it ought to have been accepted. If it was not an embodiment of their will, it ought not to have been forced upon them. And now let me reason, with you, as southern men, on this question. If we are going to live in peace together, we must act in harmony in the application of all just and fair principles. Suppose that, last winter, we had had an Abolition President, an Abolition majority in both Houses of Congress, and that Kansas had had an Abolition Governor and authorities. Suppose that by some means—just such means as those by which the Lecompton convention was called—a convention had assembled composed of Abolitionists. Suppose the understanding to have been that the constitution was to be submitted to the people; that the convention had assembled, and it was discovered that the pro-slavery men were in a majority of five to one in the Territory. Suppose, under these circumstances, the convention had refused to submit the constitution to the people, and had attempted to force an Abolition constitution down the throats of a pro-slavery people against their will. Would you, the people of the South, have submitted to such a wrong? Would you have suffered an Abolition constitution to be forced down the throats of the people of any Territory in opposition to their wishes, more especially had such a constitution contained a provision that it should not be changed for seven years, and not then except by a two-thirds vote; so that the minority having once fastened it on the people, that same minority could perpetuate it forever in opposition to the wishes of the majority.

Now, if I do not mistake the southern character and southern patriotism, you would never have submitted patiently and unholy to such an attempt to violate the great principles of self-government. I am not going to enter upon a discussion as to whether this constitution was the act of the people of Kansas. If it was not their act, then I was right in opposing it; if it was their act, then you can draw your own inferences. I will only say now, that it was sent back to the people of Kansas under the provisions of the English bill, which submitted the question in an indirect manner, and was rejected by a vote of eight to one. Under these circumstances, who can say that it ever was the act of



the people of Kansas. But I am not going to re-open that question. It is now settled. Let the asperities growing out of the controversy die with the controversy.

All I ask is, that in future we recognize the right of the people of a Territory to form a free State, or a slave State, as they may choose, and come into the Union on an equality with the other States.

A few words more and I have done. I will only say to you, in conclusion, that if we recognize and observe this principle of State rights and self-government for the people of the Territories, there will be peace forever between the North and South, and America will fulfil the glorious destiny which the Almighty has marked out for her. She will remain an example for all nations, expanding as her people increase and her interests demand more territory. I am not in favor of the acquisition of territory by fraud, violence, or improper means of any kind; on the contrary, I would never permit the Federal Government to be an instrument in the hands of foreign powers to carry out their purposes upon the American Continent. Let us adopt a policy consistent with our destiny, and then bide our time.

[Mr. Douglas was apparently about to bring his remarks to a close at this point, when, in response to calls of Cuba! Cuba! from the audience, he proceeded thus:]

It is our destiny to have Cuba, and it is folly to debate the question. It naturally belongs to the American Continent. It guards the mouth of the Mississippi river, which is the heart of the American Continent and the body of the American nation.

Its acquisition is a matter of time only. Our Government should adopt the policy of receiving Cuba as soon as a fair and just opportunity shall be presented. Whether that opportunity occur next year or the year after, whenever the occasion arises and the opportunity presents itself, it should be embraced.

The same is true of Central America and Mexico. It will not do to say we have territory enough. When the Constitution was formed, there was enough, yet, in a few years afterwards, we needed more. We acquired Louisiana and Florida, Texas and California, just as the increase in our population and our interests demanded. When, in 1850, the Clayton-Bulwer treaty was sent to the Senate for ratification, I fought it to the end. They then asked what I wanted with Central America. I told them I did not want it then, but the time would come when we must have it. They then asked what my objection to the treaty was. I told them I objected to that, among other clauses of it, which said that neither Great Britain nor the United States should ever buy, annex, colonize, or acquire any portion of Central America. I said I would never consent to a treaty with any foreign power, pledging ourselves not to do in the future whatever interest or necessity might compel us to do. I was then told by veteran Senators, as my distinguished friend well knows, (looking towards Mr. Soule,) that Central America was so far off that we should never want it. I told them then, "Yes; a good way off—half way to California, and on the direct road to it." I said it was our right and duty to open all the highways between the Atlantic and the Gulf States and our possessions on the Pacific, and that I would enter into no treaty with Great Britain or any other Government concerning the affairs of the American continent. And here, without a breach of confidence, I may be permitted to state a conversation which took place at that time between myself and the British Minister, Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer, on that point. He took occasion to remonstrate with me that my position with regard to the treaty was unjust and untenable; that the treaty was fair because it was reciprocal, and it was reciprocal because it pledged that neither Great Britain nor the United States should ever purchase, colonize, or acquire any territory in Central America. I told him that it would be fair if they would add one word to the treaty—so that it would read that neither Great Britain nor the United States should ever occupy or hold dominion over Central America or Asia. But he said: "You have no interests in Asia;" "No," answered I, "and you have none in Central America."

"But," said he, "you can never establish any rights in Asia." "No," said I, "and we don't mean that you shall ever establish any in America." I told him

it would be just as respectful for us to ask that pledge in reference to Asia, as it was for Great Britain to ask it from us in reference to Central America.

If experience shall continue to prove, what the past may be considered to have demonstrated, that those little Central American powers cannot maintain self-government, the interests of Christendom require that some power should preserve order for them. Hence, I maintain that we should adopt and observe a line of policy in unison with our own interests and our destiny. I do not wish to force things. We live in a rapid age. Events crowd upon each other with marvelous rapidity. I do not want territory any faster than we can occupy, Americanize, and civilize it. I am no fillibuster. I am opposed to unlawful expeditions; but on the other hand, I am opposed to this country acting as a miserable constabulary for France and England.

I am in favor of expansion as fast as consistent with our interest and the increase and development of our population and resources. But I am not in favor of that policy unless the great principal of non-intervention and the right of the people to decide the question of slavery, and all other domestic questions, for themselves shall be maintained. If that principle prevail, we have a future before us more glorious than that of any other people that ever existed. Our Republic will endure for thousands of years. Progress will be the law of its destiny; it will gain new strength with every State brought into the Confederacy. Then there will be peace and harmony between the free States and the slave States. The more degrees of latitude and longitude embraced beneath our Constitution, the better. The greater the variety of productions, the better; for then we shall have the principles of free trade apply to the important staples of the world, making us the greatest planting as well as the greatest manufacturing, the greatest commercial as well as the greatest agricultural power on the globe.

These are my views in regard to our foreign relations. They are questions I had not intended to discuss; and I should not have done so if some gentleman in the crowd had not called my attention to them. My votes in Congress have always been in harmony with the line of policy I have here marked out. It matters not whether you acquire more territory, or how much or how little you wish to acquire. Expansion is the law of our existence; when we cease to grow, we commence to decline. Hence our course is onward, on the principle established by our fathers, under divine inspiration, as I believe, in the formation of the Government.

And now permit me to return my grateful acknowledgements for the kindness with which you have listened to me, and to retire.



SPEECH  
AT  
INDEPENDENCE HALL, PHILADELPHIA,  
TO THE  
MAYOR, COUNCIL, AND CITIZENS COMMITTEE,

JANUARY 4, 1859.

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Wm. E. Lehman, Esq., on behalf of the citizens' committee, introduced Senator Douglas to the Mayor and Councils. He said:

MAYOR HENRY: It was my agreeable duty to be one of the committee appointed to go to New York, and wait upon the distinguished Senator of Illinois, and extend to him a cordial invitation to visit our city. In the performance of that duty, I not only represented his personal and political friends, but, in a measure, the corporate authorities of the city. I informed Senator Douglas that the Councils of the city, without distinction of party, had unanimously tendered him the use of Independence Hall to receive his friends, and that it was your intention, as Chief Magistrate of this municipality, to welcome him. I deem it proper to state that the Senator, in his reply, consented to waive all his private arrangements, and to forego engagements of a pressing public nature, to accept this grateful tribute of respect. It is with great pleasure that I now introduce to you the illustrious Senator.

Mayor Henry then addressed Senator Douglas in the following:

MR. SENATOR: The Councils of Philadelphia have tendered you, in passing through this city, the use of the Hall of Independence for the reception of your friends, and in their name I welcome you upon this occasion.

This spot is the common heritage of American freemen. Within these walls, memorable for the most illustrious deed in our country's history, hallowed more than once by the ashes of the mighty dead, cherished as the depository of the mementoes of patriots and heroes, all other sentiments merge in that of unalloyed devotion to the Union, its prosperity and its perpetuity.

I greet you, sir, as a member of those National Councils on whom devolves the guardianship of our nation's interest and destiny; as one whose eminent position in those councils has elicited the admiration and respect of so many of your fellow-citizens.

Permit me, individually, to express my wishes for your personal welfare, and the assurance that the hospitality of Philadelphia will be well cared for by your surrounding friends.

SENATOR DOUGLAS'S SPEECH.

Senator Douglas, in response, said: MR. MAYOR—It has fallen to my lot, as a public man and as a politician, to receive many testimonials from political and partisan friends, which, under the circumstances, were most grateful to my feelings; but the tender of the use of this hall voluntarily, as I am informed, by the unanimous sentiment of the corporate authorities of the city of Philadelphia—this hall, within whose sacred precincts no thought or no sentiment can enter any citizen's breast inconsistent with the peace of the Republic and the perpetuity of the Union—is a compliment that overwhelms me with grati-

tude. In this hall we find the pictures, and we feel the influence of the spirit, of those sages and patriots to whom we owe our independence and our constitutional form of government. Here that sentiment which now animates all the free governments of the earth first found its authoritative exposition and proclamation. There stands the bell which "proclaimed liberty throughout the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof;" and it seems as if the inscription it bears was directed by the hand of Divine Providence, for it was placed upon it far in advance of the period when any human brain could foresee that it was to be used to proclaim the independence of America over the arbitrary decrees of a British Parliament. A great principle proclaimed by the fathers of the Republic in this hall, was the right of the people of all the States, of all the provinces and dependencies, and of every community, to regulate its own domestic concerns and internal affairs in its own way. Pennsylvania has always been true to that cardinal principle of representative government. Pennsylvania, with her Franklin, and those congenial spirits who gave impulse to the Revolution, foresaw that the time might come, when, after having maintained her independence against the British Parliament, another imperial parliament might be established on her own continent equally destructive to the liberties of the people and the rights of the citizens, and hence Pennsylvania, in her instructions to her delegates who represented her in this hall, when she anticipated the Declaration of Independence, empowered them to give her assent to that declaration on the fundamental condition that Pennsylvania retained unto herself forever the right to manage her local and domestic concerns and police regulations in her own way, independent of any other power on the face of the globe.

Sir, If we remain true to these great principles of constitutional liberty proclaimed by our fathers in this hall, and consummated by the Constitution of the United States within the precincts of Philadelphia, this Union may last forever as our forefathers made it, each State retaining just such local and domestic institutions as it shall choose. If my devotion to these constitutional, conservative principles of liberty have attracted to me the attention of the constituted authorities of this vast city, it is a great reward for all of the toils that have accompanied my public life. I appreciate it a thousand times more than any partisan triumph which a transient politician may acquire in the road through life, for such a triumph must necessarily be ephemeral in its character.

Mr. Mayor, discarding all partisan spirit, as you have done, I accept this honor with a grateful heart. I have not the vanity that would receive it as a mark of personal respect. I am glad to know that I have the esteem individually of yourself; but it is far more grateful to me, as a public man, to know that your sympathy is aroused by public duties calculated to sustain and perpetuate those principles of civil and religious liberty which our fathers have transmitted to us. May we be successful in handing down to our children, and through our children to our last posterity, those immortal principles which were first proclaimed in this Hall, the witnesses of which stand now, like guardian angels, looking down upon our every act, and inspiring our prayers to Heaven that this Union, this Constitution, these States, as they exist, and have existed, may last forever, not only for the protection of our own people, but as a guide to the friends of freedom throughout the world.

Returning my grateful acknowledgements, I can only say that when I leave here I shall carry with me a recollection of this day which will never be effaced while life lasts, and over the memory of which, I trust, my children will feel more proud than of any act that has heretofore marked my public life.

# S P E E C H

BEFORE

## THE CITIZENS OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND,

ON

THE EVENING OF JANUARY 5, 1859,

When Serenaded by them at the Gilmore House.

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Mr. Douglas having been introduced, said:

FELLOW-CITIZENS OF BALTIMORE: It was my expectation to have passed quietly through your city, as it has been my custom for the last fifteen years, upon my way to the National Capitol. No longer ago than yesterday, I sent a telegraphic despatch to my family, informing them that they might expect me there to-night, when I was notified that my fellow-citizens of this beautiful city had appointed a committee to meet me half way between this and Philadelphia, and escort me here. I did not feel at liberty to disregard their kind request. I was more willing to stop and spend a night with you, and exchange my opinions with yours, for the reason that I desire to know whether my principles may be avowed in a slave State the same as in a free State—in the South and in the North alike, wherever the American flag waves over the American soil. So long as we live under the Constitution, any political creed which can not be avowed in the same terms, and sustained by the same arguments in every State in the Union, must be a fatal heresy.

Principles to be sound must be the same in Maryland as they are in the North; the same in New Orleans as they are in New York and New England; the same in the slaveholding States as they are in the free States. We have been precipitated for the last four years into a fearful sectional struggle, in which the North has been rallied against the South, and the South rallied against the North on this negro question.

What I desire to know is, whether there is not a common ground of fundamental principles under all our institutions, upon which northern and southern men can stand together, as brethren, without their surrendering any right which belongs to them under the Constitution.

Equality among the different States is a fundamental principle, and as a natural consequence from that equality of States results equality of the citizens of all the States of the Union. Any political creed is wrong that threatens injustice to any section or to any State, or the inhabitants thereof, in order to benefit any other State or any other section. We have recently been told, first in Illinois by the champion of Abolitionism, and subsequently in New York by Mr. Seward, that this Union cannot endure divided into free and slave States as our fathers made it. We have been told that these States must become all free or all slave; that they must be all one thing, or all be the other, otherwise that this Union cannot endure. In other words, Abolitionism seems to suppose that there must be uniformity in the domestic institutions of all the States. Diversity among the local and domestic institutions is the inevitable result of our political system. Uniformity is neither possible nor desirable. Our fathers, when they formed this Union, knew that, in a Republic as broad and as expensive as this, with such a variety of climate, soil and productions, there must necessarily be a corresponding variety in the local and domestic institutions of each State, adapted to the wants, conditions, and interests of each locality.

Why was this Union formed originally, with thirteen independent sovereignties, each with a separate Legislature of its own, and the right to make such laws as it desired, unless it was expected that each State had interests differing from every other and requiring laws and institutions in some respect different? Our fathers knew that the laws and institutions which were well adapted to the granite hills of New England, were not well suited to the tobacco plantations of Maryland. They knew that each locality required different laws adapted to its own interests; and hence, that each State must have a Legislature of its own to attend to its domestic concerns. If you will examine the history of the Revolutionary struggle, you will find that your own beloved State would not consent to the Declaration of Independence except on the fundamental condition that Maryland should retain forever the right to regulate her domestic concerns and internal affairs to suit herself, without interference from any other State or from the Federal Government.

You have regulated your affairs to suit yourselves, you have prescribed what shall be the relative position of the negro and the white man in Maryland. I shall not stop to inquire whether your decision is wise or unwise; that is your business, not mine. All I have to say is, you have a right to decide that question for yourselves, and having decided it, we have no right to meddle with that decision. If we do not like your laws all we have to do is to stay away where we will not come under their operation. So it is in the State of Illinois; she is a sovereign power as well as Maryland. We have adopted a different system of policy in some respects from yours. We have as much right to prescribe our policy as you have to adopt yours, and we are prepared to make a bargain with you, or rather we are prepared to stand by that bargain which our fathers made in the Federal Constitution, to let you attend to your own affairs and mind your own business, you leaving us alone to attend to our affairs and mind our business. It is none of your business whether we have negroes or not. If you want them, have them; if you do not want them, exclude them.

It is none of our business whether you have slaves or not. So long as you believe it is to your interest to retain African slavery do so, and when you get tired of it, abolish it; but do not humble yourselves or tarnish your sovereignty by taking advice from Congress upon that subject. That is what we north-western Democrats mean by popular sovereignty. When this Union was formed it consisted of twelve slaveholding States and one free State. Acting on this principle of popular sovereignty, each State being left to decide for itself, the New England States abolished slavery; then New York; then New Jersey, and then Pennsylvania. Under what principle was it that slavery disappeared from those States, except it was that of the right of the people of each State to decide for themselves? In New England they abolished slavery when they found that it was contrary to their interests to continue it. We in Illinois, while a Territory, established African slavery in defiance of the ordinance of 1787, and we tried it for many years, until we came to form a constitution for admission into the Union as a State. By that time we had discovered that in our climate, with our soil and our surroundings, it was not to our interests to continue it, and therefore we abolished it. If we had found that our climate, our soil, and our productions required negro labor, we would have held on to it with the same tenacity as the other slave States.

Permit me here to remark that this Slavery question rests upon laws higher than those of legislative enactment. It depends upon the laws of climate, of production, and of self-interest. Wherever cotton, and sugar, and rice, and indigo are the staple articles, and the climate is such as to exclude white labor, the negro must take the place of the white man on the plantation. When you get into those hot climates, it is not a struggle between the negro and the white man, but a struggle between the negro and the crocodile, which shall occupy the Delta line. In those Delta lands slavery must exist, negro labor must be employed, otherwise their cultivation must be abandoned, while in those high northern latitudes, where the earth is covered with deep snows, and where there is a severe climate, illy adapted to the constitution of the negro, and better suited to the white man, slavery can never exist, because it is not the in-



terest of the people to have it. The only difficulty in regard to this slavery question is that there is a medium climate, and it may be controverted whether such a climate is best adopted to white or black labor. Who shall decide the contest there unless it be those who live there, who have moved there with their wives and children, made it their home, and have a better opportunity of judging what they want than those residing at a distance. Hence leave this question to climate, to self-interest, to the decision of the people interested, and there will be peace, harmony and fraternity, among all the States of this Confederacy.

In accordance with this principle I brought forward the bill to blot out the Missouri Compromise line—that black line which ran across the Continent, fixing a stigma upon the local and domestic institutions of half of the States of this Union—in order to substitute in its place the great fundamental principle of self-government, upon which all our free institutions rest. Now, why should not that principle prevail. Perhaps it does not suit Abolitionists and agitators, but it does suit the great mass of the people, who only want such laws as are adapted to their interests, and who best know what those laws should be.

I know that there are those who believe that slavery is such a crime that it should be abolished at any risk. I hold that it is the right of the people to decide for themselves whether it is crime or not. Those who hold that it is, tell us that the Declaration of Independence declares all men to have been created equal, and assuming that this declaration includes the negro, demand that he shall be placed on an equality with the white man. My answer to that argument is this—the signers of the Declaration of Independence had no reference whatever to the negro, when they declared all men to have been created equal. They were speaking of white men; of men of European birth and descent, and nobody else, when they declared the equality of all men. This government was founded on the white basis; it was made by white men, for the benefit of white men, to be administered by white men. But it does not follow by any means that because the negro is no component part of this government, because he is not a citizen, and ought never to be a citizen, that he must necessarily be a slave. On the contrary, it does follow that you should extend to the negro, and to every other dependent race, all the rights, all the privileges, and all the immunities which can be safely given him consistent with the good of society.

On that principle alone all men ought to agree. But, when you come to apply the principle, you will ask me what are the rights and privileges that I would give the negro. My answer is, that is a question which the people of each State must decide for themselves. It may be proper to grant to the negro in Illinois privileges which it would not be safe to give him in Maryland, and hence it is a question for us to decide for ourselves in that State, and for you to decide for yourselves in this State. So it is with all other domestic relations; each State must decide for itself what the relation shall be, not only between master and servant, but between husband and wife, parent and child, guardian and ward; and, also, what shall be the banking system, the school system, the railroad system, and every other system, affecting their rights, their persons, and their property. Let these principles of State rights and State sovereignty prevail, and there will be no cause for jealousy and collision between the different States and Territories. Let these principles be applied in good faith, and then this Government is capable of indefinite expansion, and will expand as fast as we need more territory and find it to our interest to acquire it.

We are a growing nation, increasing and spreading every year; for the present, we have territory enough, but we must enlarge our borders as fast as we fill up that territory, and must Americanize that which adjoins us. Let us then pursue a policy both foreign and domestic, consistent with the destiny which the Almighty has marked out for us. I never have and never will give a vote for a treaty which binds the American people never to do on the American continent that which our interest, our honor and safety may compel us to do. I felt it my duty to resist the Clayton and Bulwer treaty when it was made. I objected especially to that clause of it which said that neither the United States or Great Britain would in all future time, annex, colonize, or exercise dominion over any portion of Central America. I was asked what I wanted with Cen-

tral America then. I replied that we did not want it then, but that the time might come when we would want it. I was told that it was so far off that we could never desire it. My answer was that it was a good ways off, about half way to California, and on the direct route to it; and if California was not too far off for us, I did not see, how the half-way house could be too remote for our wishes and desires.

The time may come when we shall be compelled for the sake of our own interests, and for that of humanity, commerce and stable government, to annex Province after Province of Mexico, and to take Cuba too, and to expand indefinitely, yet steadily and slowly, acquiring territory as we Americanize it and need it, until this nation shall become one ocean-bound Republic. It may not be in your lifetime nor in mine; it may not be in the lifetime of our children; but I trust that the saying applied to other countries is true of ours, that the nation never dies. I trust the American nation will survive forever. If it does, it must expand, for to increase, multiply, and grow, is the constitutional law of our existence. Hence, let us pursue a foreign policy by which we will have control of our own actions at all times with reference to the American continent, and which will leave us free when the time comes to do that which we, or our children, as the case may be, may determine that our interest and safety require us to do. But that foreign policy must be accompanied with a domestic policy, which preserves the rights and sovereignty of the States, and protects each State in the right to decide its institutions for itself, and hence avoids any jar or collision when new States are admitted into the brotherhood. With this domestic policy there can be no occasion for strife between the free and slave States.

My friends I have given you an epitome of the principles which I discussed in Illinois in the late contest with the Abolitionists and their allies, I appealed to the people of Illinois by their love for the American Union, to preserve sacred the fraternal feeling between the old and the new, the free and slave States; I pointed them to Bunker hill, to Bennington, to Saratoga and to Monmouth; I pointed them to King's Mountain, Guilford Court House, and to Yorktown; I showed them that in the Revolution, northern and southern men stood shoulder to shoulder in a common cause, fought under the same banner, poured out their blood in common streams, and shared common graves to secure the liberty which we now enjoy. Why cannot northern and southern men live under this Constitution in the same spirit in which our fathers framed it. We can if we will observe between the different States, that good old rule which our mother's taught us—that golden rule which every good mother teaches her son when he goes abroad, my son remember to mind your own business and leave your neighbor's alone. That advice is as applicable to States, Territories, and communities, as it is to individuals.

My friends, it has been my duty during the summer to talk more than was consistent with my strength or agreeable with my feelings. I had determined that I would proceed quietly to the Capital, without making any more speeches, but when I found my fellow-citizens of Maryland, of this great city of Baltimore, sympathising with the people of the North in behalf of sound constitutional principles, I could not refrain from stopping and exchanging sentiments, in order to see if we did not advocate the same principles and entertain the same patriotic regard for the Constitution under which we live. I believe that if these principles are firmly adhered to and faithfully carried out, this glorious Union can exist forever, divided into free and slave States, as our fathers made it, each State retaining the right to have just such laws and institutions as it may choose, and to modify and change them as it may see proper. I renew to you my grateful acknowledgments for the kind and respectful manner in which you have listened to me, and beg to bid you good night.













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